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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 001415

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: HAMAS FURTHER CONSOLIDATES POWER WITH DEFEAT OF HILLIS FIGHTERS IN GAZA CITY

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1407

[B.](#) JERUSALEM 1387

[C.](#) JERUSALEM 1361

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[11.](#) (C) Summary. 11 Palestinians were killed and 106 injured on August 2 after Hamas police stormed Hillis clan neighborhoods in Gaza City to seize suspects in the July 25 beach bombing. 188 clan members entered Israel near Nahal Oz fuel depot, where they were disarmed, strip-searched and afforded medical treatment. PM Salam Fayyad told the Consul General August 3 that President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) sent the Israelis mixed signals on what to do with the clan members. As of 1700 local August 4, at least 87 clan members and Fatah fugitives have been transported to Jericho pending determination of their disposition (not including Fatah and clan leader Ahmad Hillis). End summary.

Hamas Police Storm Hillis Clan
Strongholds; 11 Killed in Fighting

[12.](#) (SBU) 11 Palestinians were killed (3 Hamas policemen and 8 Hillis clan gunmen), and about 106 injured in Gaza City's Shuja'iya neighborhood on August 2 after Hamas police cordoned off blocks controlled by the Hillis clan and attempted to enter and arrest suspects in the July 25 beach bombing. Hamas police and Executive Force officers attacked, and partially destroyed several buildings. By 1630 local, Hamas police had full control of Shuja'iya and arrested four suspects in the July 25 bombing, including primary suspect Zaki al-Sakani.

Clan Fighters, Fatah Militants
Flee to Israel

[13.](#) (SBU) At 2000 on August 2, about 188 men from the Hillis, Ayyad, and Hassanayn families, and several Fatah militants wanted by Hamas, fled towards Nahal Oz crossing to Israel while Hamas militants fired nine mortars at them (three of which landed on the Israeli side of the perimeter fence). The IDF disarmed and bound the men, and strip-searched most looking for weapons/explosives. The injured (including Ahmad Hillis) received medical treatment on-site or at hospitals in Ashkelon and Beer Sheva.

Status of Those Who Fled

[14.](#) (SBU) As of 1700 local August 4, 87 clan members and Fatah militants have been transported to Alami Camp in Jericho pending determination of their disposition. (Note: 32 Palestinians were sent back by the IDF on August 3, and

according to Palestinian press, were immediately arrested by Hamas. Several others are currently being questioned by Israeli security agents, including Ahmad Hillis. End note). PA contacts told POL FSN August 4 that most of the 150 will be bused to Jericho with IDF escort, since there is an Israeli legal challenge pending against the GOI to block their return to Gaza, the PA does not want them brought to Ramallah, and the IDF wants the group to leave Israel immediately. (Comment: The PA is concerned about friction between the Hillis group--which did not oppose Hamas' June 2007 takeover of Gaza--and other Fatah elements if the group is brought to Ramallah. End comment).

¶15. (C) PM Salam Fayyad told the Consul General August 3 that he believes Abbas initially requested the GOI allow the clan members and Fatah men to be transported to Ramallah, subsequently changed his mind and withdrew the request, but now supports allowing most of the group to stay in the West Bank. Fayyad also said the only contact his office had with the Israelis was a call between his chief of staff (Aziz Abu Daqqa) and MoD Legal Advisor Eitan Dangot, in which Abu Daqqa passed Fayyad's view that the Gazans should not be brought to Ramallah.

West Bank Reactions: Abbas Stresses Need for Dialogue, al-Aqsa Threatens Hamas

¶16. (SBU) President Abbas told press August 3 that Hamas had engaged in "criminal activities" in Gaza, but all Palestinian factions, including Hamas, must reconcile. He urged continued GOE efforts on national dialogue. Several West

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Bank Fatah spokesmen called August 3 for President Abbas to take strong measures against Hamas, including issuing a decree outlawing Hamas as a political organization and/or banning its activities in the West Bank, withholding salaries to PA employees in the Gaza Strip, arresting Hamas officials, and requesting that Arab governments extradite Hamas officials to the PA.

Hamas Reactions: Hillis Defeat Part of Larger "Security Campaign"

¶17. (U) Hamas "Interior Minister" Sa'id Siyam told local press that the August 2 attack against the Hillis clan was part of a larger security campaign to arrest criminal suspects and "rogue elements." Siyam said Hamas security forces apprehended many "outlaws" whom the Hillis clan had been protecting, including Zaki al-Sakani, wanted for the July 25 bombing. He said Hamas police seized arms caches and explosives workshops in the Hillis quarter and bomb precursors similar to those used in attacks against Hamas. Siyam said operations demonstrates that the Hamas "Interior Ministry" will not allow any clan to violate the law or use force to "terrorize others."

Comment

¶18. (C) In the culmination of efforts to seize and consolidate power, Hamas has broken the Hillis clan, one of Gaza's largest, and demonstrated that it no longer needs clan or faction allies to rule. Hamas has used the July 25 beach bombing as justification to crackdown on various militant splinter groups, NGOs and media affiliated with Fatah and the PFLP and now Ahmad Hillis and his allies, who had stayed out of May-June 2007 Fatah-Hamas clashes and forged an accommodation with Hamas. There have also been clashes between Hamas forces and the Dughmush clan/Army of Islam, which might be the next target in Hamas' consolidation of power. While rivalries persist within Hamas, the end result of these events is that Hamas has emerged stronger in Gaza and PA prospects of regaining authority in Gaza are virtually

non-existent.
WALLES